THE CLAIMS

1.-30. (canceled).

31. (previously presented) An implantable device-implemented method of early detection and monitoring of congestive heart failure in a patient, which comprises the steps of: measuring local impedance of a portion of the patient's body generally occupied by the lungs solely through surface mounted electrodes on the device with the device implanted subcutaneously in the patient's body at the locality where the impedance measurements are to be performed, determining when the local impedance measurements are indicative of a condition of congestive heart failure based on factors other than the existence of edema, detecting the patient's heart rate/activity pattern through said electrodes while concurrently monitoring said local impedance measurements to evaluate cardiopulmonary status of the patient, and evaluating the trend of the heart rate/activity pattern and said concurrent local impedance measurements against one another over a selected period of time, as an additional indicia of congestive heart failure.

32. (canceled)

33.   (new) A method for identifying congestive heart failure in a patient having a heart and lungs with a subcutaneous monitoring device having a plurality of surface-mounted electrodes implanted in a vicinity of said lungs, comprising the steps of:

measuring an impedance value of said lungs and said vicinity of said lungs solely through at least some of said plurality of surface-mounted electrodes on the subcutaneous monitoring device;

detecting a characteristic of said heart with at least some of said plurality of surface-mounted electrodes;

determining a trend based on said impedance value and said characteristic, said trend being indicative of a condition of congestive heart failure; and

identifying congestive heart failure as a function of said impedance value and said trend.

34.   (new) A method as in claim 33 wherein said characteristic is at least one of a heart rate and an activity pattern.

35.   (new) A method as in claim 33 wherein said identifying step is not a function of an existence of edema.

36.   (new) A method as in claim 33 wherein said detecting step occurs concurrently with the measuring step.